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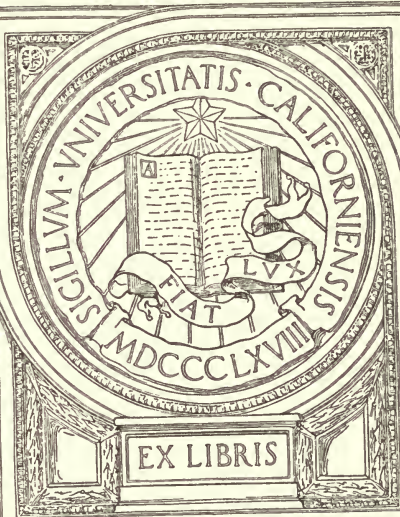
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1825-1911



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LESSONS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

FROM THE

TIMES OF WASHINGTON.

BY

GEORGE L. PRENTISS,

Pastor of the Church of the Covenant.

NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,

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A Sermon.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1863.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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LESSONS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE TIMES OF WASHINGTON.

The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers ; let Him not leave us nor forsake us."—1 KINGS viii. 57.

THE attentive reader of the Bible cannot fail to be struck with the manner in which the Jewish people cherished the traditions of their national history. That history carried the back to the very gates of Paradise. The names and the events that rendered it so remarkable, were familiar to them as household words ; it was a part of their religion to hold both in everlasting remembrance. Perhaps no nation ever existed in which the ancestral and patriotic spirit was so powerfully developed. It was wrought into all their sacred rites. It was embodied and enjoined in their holy books. It found expression in their public festivals and anniversaries. Long exile only rendered it more intense. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Now after they have been scattered and torn for nearly two thousand years, the Hebrew race still cling with delight to the great men and events of their most distant past ; they still feel bound by the closest ties to the ages of the Patriarchs, of Moses, of King David, and the Prophets.

If, then, we needed the sanction of Scripture to justify the connecting of memorable days and incidents in our history with our religious services, we have it abundantly. The Old Testament and the New are full of such sanction. They teach us, both by precept and example, that the threads of our

national destiny are in the hands of God, and are woven by Him according to His own will. They teach us that the fortunate events which have helped to establish and unfold our national life, and the illustrious men who took the lead in those events, were ordained of Heaven, and that we should remember them with pious gratitude, and should hand them down in honor to our posterity. There is no other way to keep bright and unbroken the links of that mystic chain which binds us in dutiful affection to the Past and to the Future. It is a sad mark of degeneracy, when a people never stop, both for their own and for their children's sake, to commemorate the virtues and take counsel of the example of their forefathers; just as it is the sign of a poor and shallow domestic life when, rooted in the present alone, it is enriched by no old and hallowed family memories.

This Christian Sabbath, as you are aware, is also the anniversary of the birth-day of that incomparable man, whose name is still enshrined, as is no other, in the reverence and grateful affections of the American people. It is a day to be forever marked with a white stone. He, whose birth it recalls, was justly entitled the FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY. He was, and is, our greatest earthly benefactor. In raising him up to be the leader of our revolutionary armies, and then to be the wise counselor, organizer, and first President of the infant Republic, God bestowed upon us a gift for which neither we nor our latest posterity shall ever be sufficiently thankful. The influence and character of GEORGE WASHINGTON have done more to form the Union, and to render it so worthy of our love, than any other single human cause. The world has seen as yet only the first fruits of this benignant and mighty influence. When the fierce storm of civil discord now beating upon us, and threatening wreck to the great Ship of State, whose keel was laid by that wise master-builder, shall have passed away, I doubt not the name of Washington will become again, as it was in other days, a political talisman and bond of union to the whole nation, and the most perfect symbol of American patriotism.

Since our troubles commenced, the question, I suppose, has

suggested itself to thousands of minds: "What would have been the course of Washington—how would he have acted in this crisis?" a question which, it is obvious, could be answered only after deciding several important previous questions. It is a subject, however, which I do not propose to discuss; nor would its discussion, in this mere personal form, be likely to yield any good fruit. Every man's duty is prescribed by the Providential work and circumstances of his own age. God does not allow us to serve Him, or to serve our generation, by mere rote. As Christians, we have our peculiar task quite as truly as the apostles and evangelists, and primitive saints had theirs. Their doctrine and example should guide and animate us, but that is all. We can copy and repeat their specific work no more than we can go back eighteen hundred years, and pass through our probation in the first, instead of the nineteenth century. So, too, as American citizens, we have our appointed task quite as distinctly as our patriot fathers had theirs. Their exalted principles of action and their faithful example we may well adopt and imitate; but as to our work itself, it must be something very different from a bare copy of theirs, or it will be a miserable failure. Unless the object of our intelligent choice, wrought in the sweat of our own face, inspired by own personal trust in God, and stamped also with the impress of our individual character and responsibility, it cannot be genuine: it will not live on, waxing in strength and honor after we are dead. Washington, and the noble army of Revolutionary heroes and sages, who fought, and toiled, and suffered with him, quitted them with rare fidelity and wisdom in their day; but if they were to come back to earth just as they left it, they could not assume our duties; they would find themselves perplexed and baffled at every turn; they would have to be educated over again before they could take our places. What is wanted, then, is not that we should give way to the men—the wiser and better men, it may be—of former times; but that we should be more profoundly imbued with their patriotic virtues; that we should rise to the height of their lofty patience, perseverance, moral courage, faith in God, and loyal self-devotion. That is what we want. And

the more religiously we study the times and character of our fathers, the more devoutly we cherish their memories, in order to resemble them in these things, so much the better.

This brings me to the topic on which I desire to speak to you during the rest of this hour, viz.—*Some of the lessons of encouragement to be drawn from a comparison of the times of Washington with the troublous times through which we are passing.* I assume, of course, as the basis of my remarks, that our war of independence was a righteous struggle, and that the civil revolution by which it was inaugurated and completed, justly deserves to be ranked among the most important and auspicious movements of modern civilization. This is a point I need not stop to argue, for it is a part of our consciousness and birth-right as American citizens. I assume, further, that the war for the Union, in which we are now engaged, is also a righteous struggle; fraught, too, with momentous and, if successful, with highly beneficial results. On this point the judgment of history is yet to be passed; but not doubting what in the main that judgment will be, I shall take it for granted, at least for the present. Here, then, we have two great historic movements; occurring in the same land, among the same people, and each designed to further the Divine purpose in the world. One of them occurred more than four-score years ago—the other is still in full progress. Is it not fairly to be presumed that a careful study of the former will throw a good deal of light upon the latter? History, it is true, never copies itself. Its march is always forward, even when it seems to be retracing its steps. New and old events often strikingly resemble each other, but when most alike, they are also most unlike. The more vital and important the epoch, so much the more positively will it be distinguished from all that went before. God does not come to judgment, and shake the world to its foundation, for the sake of merely repeating what He has said and done already. The principles of His moral government are immutable, but their application is endlessly diversified. He speaks to each generation with a special voice and emphasis, assigns to it fresh tasks, and works a work in it which manifests His eternal justice, wisdom, and goodness in new forms. Hence, it is so interest-

ing and instructive to consider His ways in the past. We discern in them the operation of the same Providential laws which are determining the events of the present; and although this does not enable us to foresee the exact course of those events, since the circumstances and agents through which the divine laws operate are so different, yet is it eminently fitted to inspire us with hope and confidence respecting the final issue. For it is hardly needful, I trust, to say from a Christian pulpit, that, however much it may appear so to the eye of sense, still in point of fact, chance has no veritable rule in this world; no more amidst war and the tumult of the people than in the most peaceful times. All things come to pass and are governed according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. He putteth down one and raiseth up another. He sitteth above the waterfloods, and reigneth King forever. Events and individuals, whether we call them small or great, are what they are by His ordaining or permissive will. The insect that uses up its petty existence in a summer's day is not below, nor is the mightiest man on earth above the grasp of that unseen but most skillful and resistless Hand, which guides the wheels of nature and of history. An impious denial of this truth drove the haughty king of Babylon from men, and made him "eat grass as oxen, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." Listen to his own account of his recovery from this state of imbruted madness. "*And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation! And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou?*"

It is by the light of this sublime doctrine that we must ponder the records of the Past, if we would learn from them wise and cheering lessons for the present. While far from denying the freedom and responsibility of human agency, but rather estab-

lishing them both, it still asserts the absolute and righteous supremacy of the Divine will in all temporal affairs. It is a doctrine as comforting as it is sublime; and was never more worthy of being enforced than now. It is a first principle of the Christian philosophy of history. Guided by its light, let us glance at the times of Washington, and note briefly some of the lessons of encouragement which they teach us. God was then leading our country through a great crisis and turning-point in its history. He was preparing to mature and consolidate its different members, yet being imperfect, into a free, Christian nation. He was training the Thirteen colonies by the rugged discipline of war to understand their own weakness, to learn the secret of their political strength, and thus to form themselves into one grand American Union. He was educating from among the people of the colonies a race of patriot leaders and statesmen, who should frame the right Constitution of government for a free Democratic Republic; and He was educating the people also to inspire, ordain, and establish that Constitution for themselves and their posterity. These, we believe, were some of the main designs which Providence was bringing to pass in those days, and to the accomplishment of which, all things, we may fairly infer, were intended, directly or indirectly, to minister. As we now look back upon the memorable period from this distance of time, and from the heights of blessing to which it has raised us, how interesting and impressive the scene! What grand figures move across it! How large and far-reaching the events! and what is the voice with which it speaks to us in this dread hour? What does it say about the fearful and bloody drama enacting before our eyes? As I interpret that solemn voice, it says, first of all, that the cause which is now at stake is at bottom the same good old "AMERICAN CAUSE" for which Washington and his generation fought and toiled; the same cause, but almost a century further advanced.

The cause of American Liberty and Union, one and indivisible—is not that what the Father of his country fought and toiled for? is not that the burden of his parting counsels when gathering about him his untarnished robes of office, he

bade the nation farewell, gave it his blessing, and then, like one of the old patriarchs, retired to sleep with his fathers? But although the cause is essentially the same, its importance is immeasurably enhanced by new and vast material and moral interests with which, in the course of events, it has become indissolubly connected. With all their foresight and all their high hopes, how imperfectly Washington or his generation comprehended what the free, national Government which they founded was destined to grow to in less than seventy-five years! They thought, no doubt, and some of them predicted, that it would wax into a great and fruitful tree of Human Liberty; but who of them dreamed that within so short a period its majestic branches would stretch across the Rocky Mountains and overshadow the far distant shores of the Pacific Ocean! Had they foreknown what was quickly coming to pass: had they been told into what a magnificent civil and social temple of Humanity their work would so soon expand, I am sure they would have willingly redoubled their sacrifices, if needful, and fought on through twice or three times seven years! But what they could not foreknow is to us matter of sight and experience. The rapid growth of the Union in population, in territory, in agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the mechanic arts, in wealth and in all the conditions of material prosperity; but, more than all, the wonderful development of its political, social and spiritual forces are phenomena, which, doubtless, have no parallel in the history of the world. If you should search through every library in Christendom, you would be able to find no book which contains in these respects such an extraordinary body of statistical facts as the Eighth census of the United States. And how large a portion of these facts are embodiments and practical illustrations of the democratic American ideas, which are the very life and glory of our land!

The Union, then, represents the identical cause for which our Revolutionary fathers prayed and struggled: in truth, it *is* that grand old cause organized in laws and institutions, armed with national government, enriched by an invaluable experience, hallowed by a long succession of illustrious memories,

and now fighting for existence in the name and with the strong hand of the sovereign American people. The difference is, as I have said, that the lapse of three score years and ten has not only raised it to a height of power then undreamt of, but has also clothed it with a moral grandeur and grafted upon it immense new interests both human and divine, which render its claims upon our devotion peculiar and transcendent. And now, if this be so—if the contest in which we are engaged is for essentially the same object and the same principles, which called forth the energies and sustained the courage of our Revolutionary sires; if, in a word, we are striving to defend and restore what they at so much cost established, to save the national life now in its vigorous manhood, which they watched and nurtured with such tender solicitude in its struggling infancy, then I think their success ought to fill us with religious hope and confidence as to our own. It is an unspeakable encouragement to remember that they saw far darker days than we have seen, endured trials and sufferings far more numerous and severe than we have endured, fought on more than three times as long as we have fought—and yet they triumphed gloriously in the end.

This suggests another point. Washington and his compatriots encountered and overcame obstacles in the way of their success similar to those which now beset the defenders of the Union. They had their financial difficulties, and those of the most formidable character. There were great military mistakes and disasters. There were incompetent and traitorous leaders. There were sharp differences of opinion among the friends of Independence. Some of the colonies were full of secret and open enemies to the cause. Artful plotters of doubt and discontent were found in the most patriotic states and under the pretense of neutrality, hatched constant mischief.* There were

* The following statute enacted by the Legislature of New York in 1778, will illustrate this remark, besides being suggestive in other respects.

“Whereas, certain inhabitants of this State have, during the course of the present cruel war waged by the King and Parliament of Great Britain against the people of these States, *affected to maintain a neutrality* which there is reason to suspect was, in many instances, dictated by a poverty of spirit and an undue attachment to property; and whereas, divers of said persons, *some of whom advo-*

editors and politicians then as there are now, who were quite willing to sacrifice their country for the sake of gratifying their ambitious, mercenary, or vindictive passions. The corrupt contractors, ravenous extortioners and speculators, who since the beginning of our troubles have been so forcibly exemplifying the doctrine of total depravity, are not without their prototypes of those days. There also abounded then, as now, captious fault-finders, dismal croakers and men of faint hearts. Washington himself, you know, was the object of bitter abuse and calumnies; men not worthy to untie his shoe conspired to supplant him in the command of the army and in the confidence of the country. Lying and slander and misrepresentation poisoned the social atmosphere then just as they do now. Discouraged by all these things, thousands were ready to abandon the cause and make peace on any terms. It is a grave error to fancy that the people were thoroughly united in those "times that tried men's souls." The want of more perfect unity was one of the things that made the times so trying. Even good men were not all on the right side; some of them were on the wrong side and continued there to the last. It is usually so in great social convulsions. It was so in the civil wars of England. It was so in the times of Washington; and we need not be surprised or disheartened that it is so now. Let us comfort ourselves in thinking that when the right cause shall have triumphed and the incalculable blessings wrapt up

cated the American cause until it became serious, have, notwithstanding the forbearance of their countrymen, and contrary to their faith pledged by their paroles, ungratefully and insidiously, by artful misrepresentations and a subtle dissemination of doctrines, fears and apprehensions, false in themselves and injurious to the American cause, seduced certain weak-minded persons from the duty they owed to their country; and it being repugnant to justice as well as good policy that men should be permitted to shelter themselves under a government which they not only refused to assist in rearing, but which they daily endeavor to undermine and subvert," "be it enacted," &c.:

1st. That "all such men be required to take an oath of allegiance," which was prescribed in the act;

2d. That "if they refuse to take the oath they shall be removed to within the enemy's lines;" and

3d. "That if they ever return afterwards they shall be adjudged guilty of misprision of treason."

in it for the whole land and for all mankind shall fully appear, then the few good men among us, who opposed it, will be overwhelmed with shame and self-reproach ; while the myriads who were unwittingly seduced from their mental allegiance and thus led to strive against their country, will bless Heaven for thwarting their disloyal aims. As for such as tried to betray the sacred cause, or to turn its perils into instruments of unholy ambition, revenge and fraudulent gain, they will be only too glad to slink away and rot in those graves of dishonor and oblivion which are already yawning to receive them.

If history were not full of the lesson, a little reflection ought to teach us that every righteous cause struggling to maintain itself in such a world as ours must needs encounter severe trials and opposition. Nor can we reasonably expect when the social elements are all in fierce commotion, the sea and the waves roaring, that no mire and dirt will be cast upon the surface. War, especially civil war, is always fraught with demoralizing influences. That is one of its worst curses. It is the nature of war to breed vice and corruption. Its justice—the sacredness and importance of the object for which it is waged—affords no adequate protection against the mischief; and this is one reason why those wicked men, who causelessly plunged the nation into this trouble, are guilty of such a gigantic and hideous crime. The most righteous war, then, is not without dreadful evils, which may indeed be mitigated, but not avoided. It is sure to be attended with fearful loss of life, by suffering and bereavement, by destruction and waste of property, by moral disorders and calamities which no humane mind can contemplate without profound sorrow. And if this were all, the case would be sad indeed. But this is not all. There is another side to the picture. The sword is also an instrument of Divine discipline and retribution. It is one of the most effective weapons in the hands of the Almighty for executing His temporal judgments, for the punishment of wrong doing, and for the education of nations and of individuals to obey His will.

This suggests another lesson of encouragement to be derived from the times of Washington. The sufferings incident to the long war for Independence were, no doubt, immense—the his-

tory of the last two years has made us understand them as we never did or could before—but still those sufferings were chiefly endured by that age; while its blood-bought privileges and institutions, rendered seven-fold more precious, are all ours to-day, and will belong, we trust, to our children after us to the latest generation. And who does not see that the venerated founders of our Government were largely prepared for their momentous political task by the struggle and trials of the Revolution? Where else but in that fiery furnace did they acquire the consummate patriotism, the deep wisdom, the penetrating and temperate judgment, the patience and perseverance, the conciliatory spirit, and the impassioned devotion to liberty, which constituted their qualifications to be the founders of such a Government? Nothing can be clearer. His observation and experience at the head of the Continental army, educated Washington for the great civil duties to which he was afterwards called. We owe, in no small measure, to the rough schooling of the Revolutionary War, both the institutions which followed it and the sages who formed them. It was thus that God prepared its specific work, and the right master workmen, for that natal age of the Republic. Who can say that by the colossal war now raging, He is not preparing its appointed work, and the right kind of workmen for this most critical, advanced age of the Republic? Everybody having an eye to see, may now see that for many years we have been approaching a crisis in our existence as a free, Christian people, which could be surmounted only by a tremendous convulsion. That convulsion is upon us, shaking not only this but many other lands. The loathsome and malignant disease, which had so long been silently poisoning the moral and political life of the country, has broken out with a violence unparalleled in history. If the most approved signs of Providential interposition are not utterly fallacious, then is it certain that the Supreme Ruler and Judge of all the earth has taken this nation directly in hand; and that He seems fully determined either to cure or to kill it; one or the other. And if He means to cure and save it, He will do so, we may be sure, through human agency; He will do so by furnishing it with the right sort of counselors and leaders; by educating

the right workmen to do His work, just as He did in the times of our fathers ; and as He did then, so now, by training and purifying them in the fiery furnace of war and of public troubles. I believe this Providential training is now going on, and has been going on far more rapidly than our impatience is disposed to admit. I believe that in both the civil and military service of the Union there are patriotic men, whose names will hereafter fill a resplendent chapter in its history ; men who have had no other thought or desire than to serve and help to save their country, and who, in spite of a thousand obstacles and discouragements, have done so with signal courage and ability. We are too near the chief actors in these stupendous scenes to judge them fairly. Whose mind has not been more or less heated by passion ? or biased by prejudice ? or soured and irritated by disappointment ? Whose eye has had no mote, aye, no beam in it ? Posterity will, perhaps, stigmatize not a little of what some of us fancy to be gold, as miserable, base counterfeit ; but Posterity will probably stamp not a little that we think lightly of as the pure gold of old Revolutionary patriotism. We have been too prone to heap up complaints indiscriminately, and to quarrel with everything short of perfection. "It is certain," says Lord Bacon, "that the best governments, yea, and the best men, are like the best precious stones, wherein any flaw or icicle or grain are seen and noticed more than in those that are generally foul and corrupted." Washington himself, as has been said, was thought very poorly of both as a soldier and statesman, by some of his impatient and critical contemporaries. For myself I regard it as one of the first duties of loyal, Christian citizenship to take heed how we wantonly deny the merits or exaggerate the faults and involuntary errors of those who have been called of Providence and by the national voice, to bear, in high places, the heat and burden of this withering day of the Lord. They are entitled to our warmest sympathy, our prayers, and our most charitable judgment. He who willfully abuses and bears false witness against them commits a heavy crime against his bleeding country. During an ordinary quiet voyage it may do no serious harm to go about among the crew, whispering ruthless suspicions and

calumnies against the chief pilot and his officers ; but to do this in the midst of a hurricane, when nothing can save the ship but relentless vigilance, and the prompt, unquestioning obedience of all hands to orders given, is of the very essence of mutiny ; and the man guilty of it deserves to be instantly cast overboard. Let public blame and censure be founded in truth ; let them be firm, considerate, patriotic in spirit ; and even in such an hour as this, they may be highly salutary ; otherwise, they are the mere voice of faction. We owe our first and paramount allegiance to the Government of the United States ; and that allegiance binds us to loyal speech and loyal writing, as well as to offer up, if need be, all we have, and our own lives also, upon the altar of our afflicted country.*

* Strange to say, the secession dogma about allegiance finds advocates at the North, in full view of its baleful consequences, and that among men who profess to be entirely loyal to the Union. It may be worth while, therefore, to cite the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States on the point, as expressed in the recent decision of the Prize cases. In delivering the opinion of the court, Mr. Justice Grier said :

" Under our peculiar Constitution, although *the citizens owe SUPREME ALLEGIANCE to the Federal Government*, they owe also a *qualified* allegiance to the States in which they are domiciled. * * * * All persons residing within this territory, [the so-called Southern Confederacy,] whose property may be used to increase the revenues of the hostile power, are, in this condition liable to be treated as enemies, though not foreigners. They have *cast off their allegiance*, and made war on their Government, and are not the less enemies because they are *traitors* !"

The doctrine of no allegiance, or of a secondary, conditional allegiance, to the National Government, is almost as fatal to our American political system as the doctrine of atheism to the system of Christian faith. It is the *πρώτου ψευδος*—the logical and moral tap-root of secession. By this doctrine the chief priests and leaders of the Slaveholders' Rebellion fancy they have succeeded in absolving their followers from the crime of treason and in absolving themselves from the double sin of both treason and perjury. But it is a vain delusion. Their hands are stained with the blood of myriads of their innocent countrymen, and no mortal power can make those hands clean again ; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten them.

If any one wishes to see a thorough exposition of the principles upon which the duty of supreme allegiance to the National Government is based, let him read DANIEL WEBSTER'S speech, delivered in the Senate of the United States, on the 16th of February, 1833, in reply to the speech of Mr. Calhoun in support of his famous " Compact " or right of secession resolution. It is entitled : "*The Constitution NOT a compact between Sovereign States,*" and exhausts the subject. For

I do not doubt, then, I repeat it, that this crisis is already training men, not merely for the immediate work of subduing the rebellion, but for the weightiest tasks in the future. Out of this war will emerge young men, in all the professions and walks of life, whose minds have been enlarged and illuminated by great national and Christian ideas, whose patriotism has been baptized in tears and blood, who have forsworn all

power of reasoning, massive strength of thought, and deep political insight, it is unsurpassed by any other speech of the great son of New England. The argument is as conclusive as a mathematical demonstration. This speech was made thirty years ago, but the constitutional doctrine which it unfolds, and the patriotic solicitude which it breathes, seem to have been intended expressly for the present hour. As we read the following passage, for example, in the light of what is going on before our eyes, how solemn and prophetic it sounds:

"Mr. President, if the friends of nullification should be able to propagate their opinions, and give them practical effect, they would, in my judgment, prove themselves the most skillful "architects of ruin," the most effectual extinguishers of high-raised expectations, the greatest blasters of human hopes, that any age has produced. They would stand up to proclaim, in tones which would pierce the ears of half the human race, that the last great experiment of representative self-government had failed. They would send forth sounds, at the hearing of which, the doctrine of the divine right of kings would feel, even in its grave, a returning sensation of vitality and resurrection. Millions of eyes, of those who now feed their inherent love of liberty on the success of the American example, would turn away from beholding our dismemberment, and find no place on earth whereon to rest their gratified sight. Amidst the incantations and orgies of nullification, secession, disunion, and revolution, would be celebrated the funeral rites of constitutional and republican liberty."

How characteristic of the Defender of the Constitution, and how appropriate in this dread hour that is upon us, are the closing sentiments of this noble speech!

"We cannot, we must not, we dare not, omit to do that which, in our judgment, the safety of the Union requires. Not regardless of consequences, we must yet meet consequences; seeing the hazards which surround the discharge of public duty, it must yet be discharged. For myself, sir, I shun no responsibility justly devolving upon me, here or elsewhere, in attempting to maintain the cause. I am bound to it by indissoluble ties of affection and duty, and I shall cheerfully partake in its fortunes and its fate. I am ready to perform my own appropriate part, whenever and wherever the occasion may call on me, and to take my chance among those upon whom blows may fall first and fall thickest. I shall exert every faculty I possess in aiding to prevent the Constitution from being nullified, destroyed or impaired; and even should I see it fall, I will still, with a voice feeble, perhaps, but earnest as ever issued from human lips, and with fidelity and zeal which nothing shall extinguish, call on the PEOPLE to come to the rescue!"

local and party prejudices, and consecrated themselves to the undivided service of God and their country ; “ young men full of towardness and hope, such as the poets call *AURORÆ FILII*, *Sons of the Morning!*” Young men fashioned after this manner, are such stuff as our noblest sires were made of. We shall be blessed with an elect race of them ; and they, by the favor of God, will have a master-hand in guiding and shaping the coming fortunes of the Union. When the intellectual and moral life of a people is vigorous, where the national soil is deep and genial, there great civil troubles always develop the sturdiest and most benignant public virtues. I believe it will be so now. We must not, indeed, look for another WASHINGTON : one such character is enough for us—enough for all time. But we shall have an order of earnest citizens and statesmen, not unworthy to have been the friends and counselors and fellow-workers of the Father of his Country. There will arise forms of Christian manhood and patriotism commensurate with the imperial grandeur, power, and world-wide mission of the regenerated Republic. The ancestral type of American character, with its sturdy sense and vigor, bold self-reliance, free intelligence, deep moral and religious convictions, love of order, its democratic spirit, and hatred of injustice, will reappear in new strength and beauty ; but purified, let us hope, from the vices of a later age, and enriched, too, with heroic Christian qualities, which it will have gained by the trying and unexampled experience through which we are passing.

I am not ignorant that some cast a very different horoscope of the future. They see no light ahead, no bright star of promise above, but only clouds and darkness. They think the Republic has seen its best days, and is now sick unto death. They seem to have no confidence in the present, and little hope in any future generation. They fear, indeed, that God has forsaken His heritage forever. “*ICHABOD*,” they say : “*The glory has departed from Israel.*” But I do not believe that the glory has departed. The loyal spirit of the people (to borrow the words of Milton, in reply to the doubters and prophets of evil amidst the civil distractions of his day,) the loyal spirit of the people, if you consider it well, “betokens us not

degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, by casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption, to outlive these pangs, and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue, destined to become great and honorable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks ; methinks I see her, as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance ; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and, in their envious gobble, would prognosticate" approaching ruin.

It was my intention to cite some passages from the Farewell Address, in illustration of what I have been saying. That unique and immortal document—the most impressive legacy of patriotic wisdom and affection ever penned by an uninspired hand, is mainly devoted to counsels on the priceless blessings of liberty and the Union, the perils to which they would be exposed, and the right way of preserving them. A better touchstone of the real character of our national struggle could hardly be desired than the simple fact that while most of WASHINGTON'S Farewell Address would sound, in the ears of the men in arms against the Government, as both false and bitterly reproachful, there is not, on the other hand, a loyal heart in the nation which does not beat in unison with every part of it ; there is not a loyal ear in the nation upon which its touching and patriarchal counsels do not fall with a kind of supernatural force ; there is not a pulpit in the land, from which it might not be read this morning, in perfect consonance with the sanctity of the day, and with the spirit of every loyal worshipper. Is that a mere *accident* ? Take a single sentence :

“The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is now also dear to you. It is justly so ; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independance ; the support of your tranquillity at home, of your power abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of *that very Liberty which you so*

highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes, and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth, as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of *infinite moment* that you should properly estimate the immense value of your National Union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it, accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can, in any event, be abandoned; indignantly frowning at the first dawning of any attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

Imagine this passage read, or its sentiments uttered from the pulpit, to-day, in Richmond, or Charleston!

I have thus noted some of the lessons of encouragement which may be drawn from considering the way in which God led our fathers of the Revolution through the troubles of their time. It has not been my aim to discuss the general questions of the war, to vindicate the justice of the national cause, or to show how momentous are the consequences it involves to us and our children, to the American people, to the church of Christ, and to mankind. On all these points I have spoken to you many times, already; and on them all, let me add, my convictions remain unchanged, except that they have grown more intense and profound. Every month, every week, every day, the ONE GREAT ISSUE has been defining itself, or rather Almighty Providence has been defining it for us, with more and more awful distinctness, until we find ourselves absolutely shut up to one of two things: shut up as by a wall of adamant. We must either decide to let this Rebellion triumph, with all its shameless hypocrisy, perjuries, treason, and other heaven-defying crimes upon its head; triumph by planting

its iron heel yet more firmly upon the necks of its millions of black and white victims ; triumph in the destruction of this great and matchless Christian Nationality : triumph in becoming a perpetual terror to us and to the world : *or else*, with one heart and one mind, we must go straight forward, smiting it still with the sharp sword of justice, until, conquered and crushed, at whatever cost of time and blood and treasure, it shall live thenceforth only in the scorn and abhorrence of mankind, as the most causeless, wicked, and dreadful, recorded in history. This is the stern dilemma which confronts us ; and let every man, in the fear of God, remembering the honored past, and, thinking of his children after him for a thousand generations, choose which horn of it he will. Neutrality, in the face of such an issue, is moral cowardice and crime.

May it please the Almighty Ruler of the world to breathe continually upon the hearts of the people, to uphold their fainting spirits, and arm them with fresh courage and confidence in Himself, as new exigencies arise ; to give them, and their leaders also, as He gave to Solomon, and as He gave, in so eminent a degree, to our own Washington, "wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart as the sand that is upon the sea-shore."

The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers : let Him not leave us nor forsake us : That He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us : That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.

AMEN AND AMEN.

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